

**AUTOMATING THE REDUCTION OF UNSOLICITED EMAIL  
FOR REAL TIME**

**Abstract of the Invention**

A method and apparatus for reducing unsolicited bulk email, or spam, to a computer network is described having a gateway, a mail queue, and a delay queue. The gateway handles input/output for the computer network communicating outside of the computer network. The gateway may make an initial determination of a likelihood that incoming mail is spam and deliver likely spam to the delay queue, or all incoming mail may be delivered to the delay queue. Email delivered to the delay queue is held in the delay queue for a configurable amount of time, or until is determined to either be undesirable or permissible. Once an email is determined likely not to be spam or permissible, it is delivered to the mail queue for delivery to the intended recipient. Email determined to be undesirable or likely to be spam may be discarded, returned to the sender, or held for further inspection.

003493.00300